

Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

(www.istc.org.uk)



What is a technical communicator?

- Technical communicators use a number of techniques and a range of media to communicate technical information to others
- Many technical communicators have jobs with different titles – but they are still communicators
- For some technical communicators, communication is only part of their role



Some possible job titles

Technical
author

Technical
writer

Information
designer

Publications
manager

Illustrator

Information
architect

Documentation
consultant

Graphic
designer

Trainer

Training materials
developer

Web
designer



Our work

- Every time you buy something that comes with instructions, you are looking at the work of a technical communicator:
 - Flat-pack furniture
 - Mobile phone
 - Washing machine
 - Games and other programs for your computer
 - Medicines
- The list is endless...



Our work

- We also design, write and edit:
 - Policies and procedures
 - Training materials
 - Forms (paper and electronic)
 - Web pages

- Our work is seen:
 - In print
 - Online (on the Internet, an intranet or your computer)



What is involved?

- Planning and estimating
- Designing the style and structure
- Writing and editing the content
- Drawing or commissioning the illustrations
- Organising publication and distribution
- Updating content and maintaining version control



Where do we work?

- Industry:
 - Construction
 - Financial services
 - Manufacturing
 - Software
 - Transportation
 - Utilities
- The public sector:
 - Education
 - Health
 - Local government
- Voluntary organisations



What makes a good technical communicator?

Someone who can:

- Communicate with people at all levels
- Organise large quantities of information
- Ask questions without embarrassment
- Work as a member of a team and alone



What makes a good technical communicator?

Someone who has:

- An enquiring mind with attention to detail
- Imagination and creativity
- Self-discipline
- A willingness to learn
- A desire to share knowledge with others



Getting it wrong

- Financial cost
 - Increased helpdesk costs
 - Dissatisfied customers
 - Loss of data
- Human cost
 - Injury
 - Death





What is the ISTC?

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators (ISTC) is a community of professionals dedicated to making sure that scientific and technical information is communicated in an appropriate way to its target audience.

Gavin Ireland (ISTC President, 2002–2007)

You can join as an associate or a student member

www.istc.org.uk



More information

Visit the ISTC website for more information on:

- The ISTC's own open learning course in Technical Communication
- Providers of short courses in technical writing
- Academic courses in Technical Communication, leading to a BA (Coventry) or an MA (Portsmouth or Sheffield Hallam)